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# *Rossignol Rhymes*

BY

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TO ACADIA,  
THE LAND OF MY ADOPTION

*There is something of thee—as of me—  
in this little book*



## ROSSIGNOL

Of sunny France, the hardy Rossignol,  
A voyageur of note, by kwedun\* came  
Up O-gum-keg-e-ok,† of Micmac fame,  
Till from an oak-top, by a waterfall,  
He spied vast lakes and purple ridges tall;  
Then, in his birch canoe of slender frame,  
At night he dared the waves:—they overcame  
And hurried him to join the hosts of Gaul.

O, siren-natured, grey, Acadian sea!  
So soft you sing and coax; then, snarl and lash!  
Entice brave voyageurs,—your dangers veil,—  
Then dash them on the boulders in the lee,—  
(That sportive Glooscap‡ tossed to see you splash)—  
Bold victims of a Circean nightingale.

\*Bark canoe

†Mersey River

‡Mythical giant of the Micmacs





The  
Voice of the  
Forest



## VOICES OF THE SPRUCE

When Vinland harboured first the Norsemen's prow,  
The brooding spruce each hill did glorify:  
They whispered in their yearning to the sky  
And shadowed heathen dance or Christian vow.

With wisdom would the trees all men endow. . .  
They heeded not! Straightway the ringing cry  
Of greedy ax barked out. A crash! A sigh!  
In vain had been the song of tossing bough.

Centuries passed. New day—and ancient night!  
The spruces fell, their message fastly sealed,  
Till stones that grind exceeding fine revealed  
The pulp that holds the fibre of the light.  
Thus paper came. . . the forest to appease,  
And liberate the Voices of the Trees.

## MESKUK M'TASKUM\*

Ulgwedook† crawls in sinuous grace  
    'Tween billowy hills and bogs;  
It is sleek and smooth with rippling spots  
    As it creeps around the logs.

Snakily slipping among the rocks,  
    Weaving around the snags,  
It coils about the islets green,  
    And over the falls it sags.

Gorging itself in autumn and spring,  
    It will hiss and writhe and swell  
And strangle a struggling lumber-jack  
    Or engulf a seeded dell.

In summer and winter it glides along,  
    Lazy, wicked and lean;  
With appetite gone it will strike to kill,  
    Moodily serpentine.

Its tail in far Minegooskek,‡  
    It stretches its glistening length,  
Till its foaming maw in the sea slime  
    Spews the prey of its sinister strength.

\*Great Snake

†The Medway River

‡Third Lake on the Medway

## A SPORT

The air is choked with scud; the wind doth fling  
Its smoke athwart the vista of the sky  
And pile menacing purple clouds on high,  
While lightning forks 'mid thunder's battering;  
The hailstones slash; your teeth are chattering;  
To swamp your bark, the sea and gale may vie,  
Nor pause if in their monstrous play you die:  
'Tis then you are a sport if you can sing!

And can you whistle when the ducks have flown,  
Or smile and carry on instead of rest,  
And do yet better when you've done your best,  
Or grin at grief that loads your pack like stone?

If wood and stream and play you fairly court,  
And lug your share of duffle,—you're a sport!

## A VERNAL PAINTING

A-twinkle gleam the birches through the green  
And lacey raiment of a virgin spring;  
Ephemera with giddy gauzy wing  
Display their dance in mirrored pool serene;  
The tinkle of the water, cool and clean,  
Makes harmony with zepthers as they sing  
A love-song through the branches while they swing  
The birdlings, fluffed and cosy neath their screen.

Florescent, peep from emerald couch of moss,  
Shy violets, while aromatic scent  
Of clover in God's sunshine, near the burn,  
Intoxicates the bee, and shrubs emboss  
The warm earth's bosom, flowing, and content  
To mother lordly oak or humble fern.

## THE CAMP FIREPLACE

A man's home is his castle, so 'tis said,  
And even so does that entail his camp:  
A log hut it may be, and rough and damp;  
Split poles comprise the table, boughs for bed,—  
But still all his: a stronghold overspread  
By friendly trees and sun, and stars that lamp  
Sly elfin knights whose wingéd steeds do ramp  
And joust until the dawn doth snap the thread.

Fairies? But yes! And magic are the days!  
The joyous battle with the wind and stream;  
The flashing trout, the moose, the loons' weird scream;  
The storm! Then safe in shack by crackling blaze:  
For Camp without a fireplace, warm and wise,  
Is home without a mother's smiling eyes!



## THE GAME I LOVE

They sing sweet songs of gray homes in the west,  
And chant of sunset rich and lady fair,  
Of autumn, spring, the sea and mountain air:—  
Each thrums the tune that murmurs in his breast.

I, too, in song have ventured to attest  
The virtue of my snugly cabined lair,  
Where I am free from crowds and mundane care:—  
But such is not the game I love the best.

I love the bull moose for the chase he gives,  
And fat buck too, but will not track his doe:  
(I pick the fruit but let the good tree grow).  
When man may hunt 'tis then he surely lives. . . .  
I thank the Guide who guards the Ground above  
For thrill and feast from that big game I love.

## THE SPRITE OF SPRING

"I bid thee fly, not follow him who plods;  
I prithee flout what custom bids thee do;  
I claim thou shouldst not to old forms run true,  
Nor cant and moan nor give thy rival odds;  
Nor shouldst thou crave those condescending nods  
The mighty toss the less, lest lesser, too,  
Important grow, and potent, them eschew.  
I beg thee importune more fulgent gods!"

Thus sang the Sprite of Spring upon my sill.  
"Come," she cooed, "and play in the heather lush!  
Great Pheobus smiles so bare thy head to health!  
The Sun idolators—they did God's will  
And worshipped all His works without a blush.  
Come! Make thy prayer to me and share my wealth!"

## THE RAPE OF THE FOREST

Virgin Forest, summer-draped,  
    Swelling contours, cool and green,  
Mossy nooks and hidden springs,  
    Silky limbs but partly seen.

September moon, glowing full,  
    Soft and warm the forest sleeps;  
Through jet shadows stealthily,  
    To the sleeper White Frost creeps.

September morn, flaming sun  
    Melts the glittering diamonds fair  
Frost bequeathed: (but tawdry gems)  
    Forest blushes in despair.

Fated Forest, lurid, shamed,  
    Bedecks her limbs, all crimson-hued;  
Dallies with rude Autumn Winds;—  
    Winter finds her withered,—nude.

Magic Forest! Her Karma worked,  
    Her sins are healed by vernal rain;  
As cycle vast completes its turn,  
    To her God gives a soul again.

## MY AUTUMN MISTRESS

O, gaudy wood, rouged and fragrant,  
Sensual bid to primal males;  
In mirror pools, like wanton vain,  
You flaunt the hue that man regales.

My painted wood, thy perfume, color,  
Urge and tempt me to thine arms;  
All my senses, mind and instincts,  
Seek immersion in thy charms.

A monster moose,—shaggy, deadly,—  
In turn I lure with siren song;  
Eat red meat by fire snapping;  
Neath soft caress recline till dawn.

Ah, Godless wood,—flagrant, moody,—  
(The lust assuaged, my spirits flag;)  
Had my shot missed, and beast had gored me,  
Laughing, you'd caress the stag!

## NOVEMBER SNOW

A quiet, hurried rustling o'er the dale;  
The eager trees are decking out the bride,  
A-stripping off their raiment, thus to hide  
Ripe Autumn's dusky contours, and regale  
Stern Winter's austere vision, cold and pale.  
When from his icy kingdom he will ride  
To claim his own in arrogance and pride,  
The hovering clouds will drape the bridal veil.

A-quiver, huddled Birches as they blanch,  
With haste, disrobe; then, lordly Maples deign  
Their crimson cloaks to throw; and Oak-tree stanch  
Its tawny dress; nor Junipers refrain;  
Save only Pine and Fir strip every branch:—  
The Sun intrudes and lifts the veil again.

## INDIAN GARDENS

Upon the storied green where clover blooms,  
Hard by the cataract which has its head  
In Rossignol, but makes its stony bed  
In O-gum-keg-e-ok, then roars and booms  
To the far ocean,—tall and proud there looms  
A grove of ancient oaks that overspread  
A Micmac graveyard where lie men once red  
And gorgeous in their paint and eagle plumes.

The old guide drones out tales of mighty deeds  
And wondrous bow-shots of the long dead braves:  
Of how they built canoes, or moose could stalk,  
Or asked the Spirit's blessing on the seeds;—  
Then, how the pale-face customs filled the graves,  
And how the oaks would judge could they but talk.

## TROUTING

You don old clothes; with trusty rod go out  
Upon the breezy stream, amid the rocks,  
And there a fugitive from work and clocks,  
You drop a fly to tempt and put to rout  
Some doughty denizen who craves a bout  
With silk and gut and rod and reel, and mocks  
Your skill and gives you lightning starts and shocks:—  
A splash! A singing reel! You hook a trout!

You smile and sing; and then, in glee, you laugh!  
And whistle as you dip a splendid fish;  
Some get away, but still you cast and trill;  
As full of joy and sun, the air you quaff,  
You dwell upon fried trout in smoking dish:—  
You load your creel,—in every trout a thrill!

## THE FALLEN MONARCH

The dark spruce swamp, a blend of greens and grays,  
A-shine with frost of autumn day new-born,  
With scarlet maples flaming in the morn,  
And crystal grass that in the sun displays  
A thousand rainbow tints:—this scene portrays  
No beauty to that noble beast, lovelorn,  
Of hair, of hoofs, and huge palmated horn,  
That stands and sniffs for more than he surveys.

A misty meadow by a mirrored pond,  
And ice-ferns splayed in balsam-shadowed cove,  
Invite a lurking hunter's eagle eyes.  
Now, to the monster moose, in urging fond,  
Comes wavering the mate-cry through the grove:—  
He harks! And lured by siren call, he dies!



## THE TRYST

The morning hails me with its fragrance deep:  
No piercing winds nor whips of icy snow  
Come hissing in my face and sting as though  
To beat me to the ground in frosted sleep;  
For now the air is balmy: zepthers creep,  
Seductive, up the hill and sweetly blow  
Aromas of the field that make me glow  
And wonder if I should a promise keep.

'Twas by a shadowed pool, our rendezvous,  
Where last I saw my love in spangled dress  
Of red and brown and gold; though no caress  
Would she permit, nor yet one chance to woo,  
But scoffed at every lure that I flung out,  
I'll seek again my love—my speckled trout!

## THE FIBRE OF A THOUSAND TONGUES

Reply to Robt. H. Davis' "Rape of the River."

The axe doth bark in deep majestic lane;  
Its bite is keen as ripe spruce giants fall  
To fill a growing need perpetual,—  
The fibre of a thousand tongues to gain.  
The evergreens, coniferous, thus reign  
Supreme above all things industrial.  
Then through the slash, in vigor young and tall,  
Spear saplings, thick and of a lusty strain.

Autumnal drought doth parch the painted hills:  
A careless match by khakied "sport" is flung.  
He flees the flames, unshriven and unhung.  
A holocaust sweeps over swale and rills.

A poet weeps the rape of forest land;  
In justice let him curse the hunter's brand.

## CAMPING

If I were given a choice of throne or tent,—  
The throne with all its jewels and rare gold,  
Its purple hangings and proud courtiers, cold  
And cunning in their schemes and blandishment,  
Would lose its lure if breath of woodland scent  
Should warmly fan my cheek; or hunter bold  
Invite me to the hills where chums unfold  
Their honest thoughts, with truth and wisdom blent.

No sultan with his oriental pomp,  
Nor king, nor czar, nor chief of dusky tribe,  
In harem, or his treasure vaults could find  
A charm to win me from my hill and swamp,  
Or sunny lake; nor could, with splendid bribe,  
He buy, or barter for, my peace of mind.

## THE PYTHON

Ulgwedook† crawls and sinuates between  
The craggy hills, the meadows and the bogs;  
It ripples smooth and sleek around the logs,  
And weaving snakily amid the green  
And slimy snags, it coils in pools, unclean  
With cast up debris, rafting flies and frogs;  
Then, hissing through the beaver dam, it fogs  
The sunshine with an iridescent screen.

In spring and fall it gluts and gulps and swells  
To monstrous size, voracious as a boa;  
In drought it lurks beneath dark bank and reed.  
From Minagooskek‡ through the hemlock dells  
It writhes, to spew in sea-slime with a roar  
Of foam, the prey of its primordial greed.

†Micmac Indian for Medway River, N. S.

‡Fourth Lake on the Medway River, N. S.

## SHOOTING THE RAPIDS

With ever stronger sweep and swifter pace  
The smooth black water draws by rock and brush,  
And as before a storm there is a hush,  
It gathers, without sound, for a mere space  
Of time, its strength, and seems to pause and brace  
Against the mighty pull of earth; then, flush,  
It leaps with sullen roar and foaming rush  
To meet the spurning cliffs athwart its race.

Upon the tortured stream we float; then, swoop  
With breathless plunge to cleave the writhing waves  
That clutch and toss our fragile bark at will,—  
Or would, had not the steersman strength to dupe  
The wild white torrent as it twists and raves;—  
We glide, then, to a harbour calm and still.

## THE RAPIDS

Insistent as the flight of time they pour  
With never ceasing pulse,—a sparkling flood  
That sings and toys with log or maple bud  
In artful ease; they gently lap the shore,  
Or gully it with vicious swirl and roar,  
And glut themselves with pilfered leaves and mud,  
And then, indeed, they thirst for human blood,  
And strive to snatch a boatman's pole or oar.

With all their moods and vicious readiness  
To turn to tragedy excursions up  
Their lureful rills and sun-warmed, curving tides,  
I love the rapids and their strong caress,  
And blithely sip their proffered, brimming cup  
As out upon the stream my kwedun\* glides.

\*Canoe

## DRIFTING

A golden flash,—we loiter on the stream;—  
A moment is permitted us to float,  
Reflect, and revel in the blackbird's note  
Which trills and warbles from the reeds a-teem  
With airy wingéd things that hum and seem  
Just singing in the joy of day. The rote  
And the monotony of sound promote  
Sweet drowsiness, and lull the mind to dream.

To drift awhile is heavenly delight;  
A truce with duty and its toil and strife;  
We feel the gentle current's pleasant urge;  
But use and not abuse the river's might,  
For there are rapids on the stream of life  
That rush the flotsam to the briny surge.

## THE SMUGGLERS' TRAIL

In olden times while running contraband,  
The daring smugglers, arméd cap-à-pie,  
Crept up in inky blackness from the sea,  
Like giant turtles crawling to the land.  
Upon their backs the plunder of the strand  
Was silently conveyed o'er cliff and lea,—  
Up tortuous trails, and hidden,—duty free,—  
Beyond the grasp of edict or command.

The ancient trail is overgrown with weeds;  
And tourists love to ramble where is cast,  
On everlasting rocks beneath the moss  
In petroglyphs, the story of dark deeds.  
Deep scored by iron boot-heels of the past  
Are many lines with here and there a Cross.



## THE FRESHET

Twixt twilight of the winter and the dawn  
Of spring, a lazy southern zepher blows  
In idle roving over northern floes  
And flutters past the forest dark to fawn  
O'er pure white curve of hills by nature drawn  
With grace to hold the mantle of the snows;  
And thence on ice-bound stream a kiss bestows,  
Impulsively, as though 'twere passion's pawn.

That melting kiss and spicy breath bestir  
Vague tremors 'neath the river's rigid shroud;  
Its pulses throb—it harkens to the plea  
Of coaxing zephers, and though prisoner,  
It bursts its bonds, and mightily endowed  
With lust for life, it rushes to the sea.

## A WINTER SUNRISE

All rosy from its cradle in the east,  
The sun, reluctant, peeps at pallid hill,  
At ice-bound river and the frozen rill  
And spotless field, unscarred by bird or beast;  
Askance it peers at sapphire valley fleeced  
With snow, and nestled cot, and silent mill  
That hibernating cowers in the chill.  
Intense the cold;—the throb of life has ceased.

The huddled firs like brooding greybeards stand  
And glower at the meagerness of men,  
While crystal jewels on each birch display  
The rainbows of a magic fairyland;—  
The great Sun, glowing red, awakes and then,—  
Leaps forth to flame its glory to the day!

## THE STORM

A hush, then furtive tappings on the roof;  
A sigh, as from a giant in his sleep;  
A rumble, indistinct but vibrant, deep,  
As if Jove's stallions with impatient hoof  
Awaited but a signal, held aloof  
From sheer stampede to crouch; then raging, leap  
As whipping lightning crackles, and a sweep  
Of cutting hailstones shreds the forest woof.

Wild discords crash their insult to my ears;  
An instant I am fearful, trapped and bound,  
Till infinite imaginings of Man,  
Christ-dowered, lift me boldly from my fears.  
The Storm is but a ferment and a sound,  
A puny part in God's stupendous plan.

## THE WATER-LILY

Swan-white and pure it floats with golden heart  
Just opened to a sun-ray overbold  
That seeks to pierce a loveliness too cold  
In cloistered bud, but ripe for Cupid's dart  
When first in flower, or to play its part  
In spicing idle breezes, and unfold  
Its riches that there may be pollen gold  
Paletted for Dame Nature and her art.

Not for the joy of man alone it grows;  
In distant ponds its stem, so colubrine,  
And boated leaves give shelter for the fry;  
It gives its honey to the bee, and blows  
That gay ephemera may dance and dine;—  
When plucked, still gives; then patiently, 'twill die.

## OCTOBER MORN

The flesh tints of a virgin day, new-sprung  
Like Venus from a wreath of mist, gleam there  
Through ghosts of murky night, and fair  
To see, they brighter glow while matins sung  
By magic choristers of silver tongue  
Tinkle and trill in belling chords as rare  
As those that brook and pebbles sometime dare,  
Or fairies on the bluebells may have rung.

The Day moves timidly to roseate lake  
And stoops to touch its cool and placid face,  
Then rising with the shyness of a fawn,  
She shows a splendor that but One could make;  
A masterpiece, sure of secluded place,  
She dabbles in the diamonds of the dawn.

## THE GRANITE BOULDER

O, craggy mass, deep-scarred by ancient trail,—  
Before ye rested midst these clustered pines,  
And slept in sun-flecked shadows with the vines  
Festooning from the mossy nooks, and frail  
Green ferns and lichens that conspire to veil  
Thy rugged might, and deck the fairy shrines  
In this cool grotto,—what were thy confines?  
Didst thou, perchance, encumber arctic swale?

Mayhap a glacier with ponderous length  
Conveyed thee here, and dropped thee in the melt,  
As it succumbed before the solar heat.  
'Twere fanciful to credit Glooscap's strength,  
The Micmac giant, who neath hunger's welt  
Did hurl thee at some monster for his meat.

## LAKE ROSSIGNOL, NOVA SCOTIA

Aeons before the womb of myth and lore  
Conceived that mystic, eagle-pluméd god  
Called Glooscap on the trails where Micmac trod,  
Lake Rossignol caressed its fronded shore.  
High singing sea! With smile or frothy roar  
You challenge one to dare with reel and rod,  
Or wonder did once fishes walk the sod,—  
Those protoplasmic denizens of yore.

Unchanged yet ever changing is thy face;  
Grey, green or blue, the crinkles in each cove;  
The wavelets that with zepthers run a race  
Are tempered by the thunderbolts of Jove.

A troglodite, entombed by urban wall,  
Mine ear doth crave the song of Rossignol.

Cherchez La Femme





## “PHILEEN”

No rags, nor bones, nor hanks of hair for mine!  
My colleen rare has nought but temp'rament  
And dacent cover for her sentiment;  
No Kipling could describe her charm divine,  
As wielding fishing-rod and silken line  
She casts her bait with laugh and blandishment,  
Or rages with discreet disparagement  
That any fish could think she hath design!

She shure is Irish as a charlotte russe,  
And Française as a spud; as smiling as  
An April day and cold as hot July!  
At fishing she could really play the Deuce  
If once she hooked him,—as she surely has  
The singer of this song,—caught on the fly.

## A SONNET LADY

A sonnet, Lady, you ask me to write,  
But give me as a subject one so fair  
That with but modest art I hardly dare  
To venture my poor rime or stanza light;  
Nor can I do her justice with a flight  
Of rich poetic fancy or a flair  
Of genius worthy of such bob-tailed hair  
And freckles like the stars on winter's night.

My dear, I never can your faith reward  
Because of flashing smile and wondrous eyes  
And dimples that bewitch me. I surmise  
Less eager hand could strike more tuneful chord.  
So I'll not try to sing in numbers sweet  
The charm of ready wit and twinkling feet!

## HEATHEN TO CHRISTIAN

I prayed for virtues and I found it vain.  
I squandered leaden hours in black despair  
Till urge for toil replaced an urge for prayer;  
Then recognition stirred a groping brain.  
Did I this mote of eminence attain,  
This virtue called success,—through Heaven's care  
Invoked by me? Or was it thou didst dare  
To pray for one unworthy of such gain?

I know, Sweetheart, 'twas thou, with selfless love  
Who pled my cause and sowed the golden seeds.  
I thank thee! And sensing thy urgent needs  
Will importune for thee, the gods above:  
As twixt thy love and duty thou art torn,  
Jove grant thee patience till thine hour is born!

## WOLVES

All sleek and hungry-eyed they haunt the trail  
Of Mammon's votaries. Svelt and disguised  
As things of beauty, to be idolized,  
Each would the other's feebleness assail.  
Hunting in packs, in pairs, does not entail  
Stern ethics nor self being sacrificed  
For one who may be weak and agonized  
By Fate's rude flogging of a frame too frail.

Once down she's done. The pack will eat her up!  
They'll steal her mate and kill her sucking whelp.  
Indeed they'll kill their own nor heed its yelp,  
Must one but choose between her lust and pup.  
The strong survive, at last to stagger South,  
With bleak hot eyes and ashes in the mouth!

## THE FLAME OF NORWAY

In storied fiord the sea yet moans its woe,  
While conifers still huddle in the cold  
And brood like greybeards grown so very old  
That seasons are but seconds as they go.  
Great Thor yet hurls his bolts from flashing bow;  
His thunder rolls from vale to mountain bold,  
Till penitent he turns the hills to gold  
And flings Aurora's spears above the snow!

O, Scandinavia of mystic lore!  
Canst trust thy Royalty to foreign lands?  
One Princess did but now elude my hands  
To dance like Northern Lights that dart and soar.  
Perchance, in form of Venus, to entice,  
She's but a roving wisp of fire and ice—?

## MEMORY

An August night. An atmosphere of plush;  
A tree-toad trilling some old jubilee;  
A cloud-flecked lake and soft swamp melody;  
A stealthy, prying breeze and then a hush.  
I sat enthralled, my blankets in the lush  
Sweet meadow grass beneath an ancient tree  
Near Micmac cairn that loomed in mystery,  
While spirits seemed to flit through brake and rush.

I felt a presence; perfume fanned my face;  
A tremor shook me as with fright or love—  
A wraith or lass was hovering above—  
I have a memory of fire and lace—  
A fluttered hand that sprinkled me with stars—  
A velvet kiss 'neath magic lunar bars—!

## THE BURNING GLACIER

Formed in the press of Nature's fickle mold,  
At altitudes sublime and purely rare  
And yearning for the valley's balmy air,  
A virgin glacier would flee the cold;  
Sired by the frost as Alpine thunder rolled,  
And mothered by the swirling clouds that dare  
To seek great heights,—it glitters keen and fair  
And burns and chills and melts at last to gold.

So thus an iridescent maid I know,  
As cool as flaming ice in azure globe;  
Her aura drapes her as a convent robe,  
While stars blaze down upon her perfect snow.  
I prayed the frosted sphere wherein she dwelt  
Would cool my ardor ere she too should melt.



## DID EVER YOU STAND BY A BROOK

Did ever you stand by a brook and dream  
And watch it sweep, resistless, to the sea?  
Did wanton thoughts then wander wide and free,  
Intrigued by the bold impulse of the stream?  
Did brown or blue or grey eyes ever seem  
To smile to you, or dare to make a plea  
From out the river's foam,—then, turn and flee,  
Tossing to you a mere reflected beam?

Did ever you, without a seemly blush,  
Launch forth your heart upon the droning tide,  
Like some winged ship outbound to India's shore,  
(Too deeply laden for its seaward rush)  
Destined to trade for jewels of a bride  
And bring him back whom you did once adore?

## THE SUB-DEB

O, gangling miss, with all your coltish ways,  
Your flying nut-brown mane and flashing smile,  
Do you but question me with studied guile,  
Or does my wisdom really you amaze?  
Is it, then, as it seems, your mind but plays,  
Bequeathing light and music all the while,  
Without a thought of future, or of style,  
As, slender-limbed, you dance through joyful days?

O, little maid, with all your boyish grace,  
You have potentialities of Eve,  
And Egypt's Queen for whom a Caesar dies.  
Do you not sense the power of your place?  
You behold a sage you may not believe,  
While I see mighty nations in your eyes.

## GIRL OF MY HEART

Girl of my heart! Peruse this wishful line  
That would in cadence rare thy virtue sing,  
If my poor pen could bell the tones that ring  
Inspired, but mute, before thy stars divine!  
Girl of my thoughts! Let all your smiles be mine,  
Or hoard them rather till wise Kismet fling  
Me prostrate at thy feet; and were I king  
The sight of thee would turn my head like wine.

Girl of my dreams! Kneel by thy snowy bed  
And say a little prayer for one who waits,  
Dogged by such pain that he but stands aghast  
And wonders if 'twere harder to be bled  
On Calvary, deserted by one's mates. . . .  
O, Girl of me! May God consent at last!

## STARRY EYES

I dreamed a dream one night long, long ago,  
And since that wondrous vision every day  
Hath seemed a month in span. I am distraight  
And sad or joyous, which, I do not know.  
'Twas of a maid smiling in the fire's glow  
I dreamt. What was she like? I cannot say,  
Though ravishing she was with eyes blue-grey.  
(Mayhap she 'phoned me that her eyes were so).

When maid thus dazzles what am I to do?  
Demand that she switch off her twinkling lamps  
Or turn them on another while she vamps?  
But nay! My brother might be blinded too.  
I'd gladly risk my sight as sacrifice  
Could I but plumb, soul-deep, her starry eyes.

## CONSCIENCE

Yea, Maiden, forsooth I would forget thee;  
I would, that is, could I but serve the hand  
That dryly bids me follow its demand;  
'Tis conscience beckoning. Would I were free!  
Must that wench always dog so jealously  
My ev'ry thought, and sternly, coldly brand  
Each impulse to indulge a passion grand  
As something of deceit and low degree?

I crave thee, dear: thy breasts, thy lips, thy laughter,  
Because thy smile is more to me than gold  
Or worldly fame that may be bought and sold. . . .  
With thee I sing; who knows of the hereafter?  
Does God then pause to score our happy sighs  
As He commands the marching of the skies?

## TO THE HOSPITABLE FRANCES STARR

Gliding—from the upland scent of pines;  
Shooting—down to salty atmosphere;  
Riding—through the rolling rounded hills;  
Looting—summer weather of its lure.

Dipping—in the curling creamy foam;  
Glazing—as it licks the crispy sands;  
Dripping—in the sun-soaked summer winds;  
Lazing—far from turmoil of the towns.

Rousing—you are lulled by singing surf;  
Gleaming—in the starlight's soft caress;  
Drowsing—while around you and above,  
Beaming—is the Star of Graciousness.

## A SONG

A tinkle of music  
    Swept through the branches  
        Of oak-trees which haloed  
The lake's shadowed shore.

Illusive it wakened  
    Deep chords of the forest  
        Which sagged unattuned  
To such lyrics before.

The music though faded  
    Like a fire-fly's gleam  
        Has left me for comfort  
The trail of a dream.

War





## TO THE WAR POETS

All through the fevered days of Mons and Marne,  
While Hunnish hordes urged forward under lash,  
Ripped wide and tore our lines with shock and gash,  
And stately fort succumbed as humble barn,  
And turgid stream dyed red both earth and tarn,—  
Stout Allied hearts, unwavered by the crash,  
Right doggedly delivered slash for slash,  
Backed by up white-faced women,—knitting yarn.

Most famous heroes issued from the fray,  
Well honored by *Le Croix* or churchyard chime:—  
And none deserve our plaudits more than they  
For stanchly winning through the gore and grime;—  
But spare for those such laurels as you may,  
Who wrought from sordid strife a gorgeous rhyme.

## THE PATHOS OF PEACE

As the boom of the guns on the battle line  
And the shout of victorious troops  
Give way to the fluttering Dove of Peace  
And retreat of Kaiser's dupes,  
Then,—  
A shuddering sigh floats up to the sky,  
The national spirit droops.

As the paling panoply of Peace  
Usurps the pageant of War  
And exaltation of will to win  
Departs from the conqueror,  
Then,—  
We count up the cost and friends we have lost;  
The burden chafes us raw.

The sonless mother and loverless maid  
The widow and cripple sway  
Under a load almost too great  
For feeble strength to weigh;  
But,—  
Such goal to attain, they'd offer again  
The score of Mars to pay.

## BALM O' GILEAD

What of the dam of heroic son?  
    (The lad that was shot in France?)  
You note with her sorrow an air of pride,  
    A gleam of joy in her glance.

What of the sire of ministering nurse?  
    (The Sister that nursed too near?)  
He shows you a medal, sent from there,  
    With hardly a plaint or tear.

What of the widow of tender years?  
    (Of the Ace in the Flying Squad?)  
"He killed a lot of Boches, first,"  
    She boasts with prideful nod.

What of the parents bereft of child?  
    (Perhaps two of surpassing charm?)  
'Twas dreaded plague,—no glory theirs,—  
    Dear God! where is thy balm?

## SOCKS

A lonely shepherd and two faithful dogs  
Three thousand sheep were herding through the sage;  
The fragrant fodder making pasturage  
Upon the Badlands, while the purple fogs  
Of evening swirled by painted butte and bogs.  
Ten thousand acres gave its heritage  
That wool might grow and honest men might wage,  
Well-shod, a war against the Prussian hogs.

A thousand times ten thousand needles flew  
As eager women knit the wool to shape  
The tired feet that trampled Flanders mud,  
While urging back, to sty, the porcine crew:—  
A billion lousey socks helped stop the rape,—  
Plain, dirty socks, most proudly stained with blood.

## SHIPS OF PEACE

Beneath the sea the red fires suck and snore,  
And sweating men are giving half their all  
To vitalize these monsters that enthrall  
The souls that serve, that souls be saved from war.  
Above the sea the wind or guns may roar,  
And sleepless men upon the bridge will call  
Commands in steady voice through smoke or squall,  
That foe afloat may quail as those ashore.

Now war is done, if for but a brief span,  
And men-o'-war address society;  
The blast of shotted gun perforce shall cease,  
And Tar will sport with rum and courtesan.  
Yet force still lurks behind the gaiety,  
For ships of war are ships that make the peace.



# The Sea





## THE FISHERMAN

She was born of the woods and salty wind,  
Nursed as the sea's own spawn,  
Sailed by the sons of the womankind  
That love a sailor's brawn.

CHORUS—Then blow ye down the long blue lane,  
And blow ye home from sea;  
Through Arctic snow and tropic rain,  
Our prayers will follow thee.

Then after the toil on the teeming Banks,  
And each schooner has found her place  
Snug in the harbour from Winter's pranks,  
Somebody whispers: "A Race!"

CHORUS

So dressing their wings for sport so keen  
They play as hard as they toil,  
And sail such a race as never was seen:  
They make the old ocean boil!

CHORUS

For fish or a frolic they're ready to sail:  
It's all within their ken;  
For pleasure or profit they wet a rail,  
*But take their toll in men.*

Then blow ye down the long blue lane,  
And blow ye home from sea,  
But since the race off Scotia's main,  
There's one less lad for thee.

## THE SURF RIDER

Outside the breakers, far beyond the lee,  
I rest and rock within my kwedun\* brave,  
And nod to lullaby of strumming wave  
That harps on golden strands a song of sea;  
Combers are dancing as they list, and free  
To toss their saucy ruffs on high and lave  
The sweet west wind that seems their lips to crave,  
And blows them silver bubbles in its glee.

The eager ocean urges me to play;  
It jostles as it tempts me to a ride;  
I turn my kwedun, dart and catch the stride  
Of reeling wave, then mount and sail away!  
The wine of life is of my giddy flight;  
I skim the surf and, as a gull,—alight!

\*Canoe

## ROCKAWAY BEACH IN JANUARY

I long for salty winds and waters blue,  
And cannot think the friendly summer sand  
Is aught but velvet strip 'twixt sea and land  
That couched me in July to sea-gull's mew.  
'Tis thus, a Troglodyte, the coast I woo,  
And fly my cave, and dare Boreas' hand,  
And list with joy the music of the strand  
Until a snarling sea growls into view.

The music changes to a soulless dirge;  
I glimpse a monster of white claw and tusk  
Which rushes at the beach from out the dusk;  
A scaly beach that hisses at each surge. . . .  
Are these Leviathans at war or play?  
They seem absorbed. . . I think I'll steal away!

## CHANTEY OF THE GRAND BANKS

Of robins and larks the poets may glee,  
Of chickens and piping vamps,  
The birds of a feather that flock together,  
And wiggle and wink their lamps.

I'd much rather see than be a gull,  
But gulls are the birds for me.

CHORUS—Yo Ho! ye lubbers! Get over the rail!  
The fisherman's going to sea;  
And that's the place for a sailorman,  
And that is what I be!

The lubbers may praise and all agree  
That the "trot" is a great delight;  
To grab her and waddle, and then do a toddle  
Is to 'em a beautiful sight.

I'd much rather ride than be a wave,  
But waves are the jazz for me!

### CHORUS

The hunters may hunt the woods so free,  
And guzzle their tough moose steak;  
Or trap the red otter in calm fresh water,  
Or paddle about a lake.

I'd much rather catch than be a fish,  
But fish is the game for me!

### CHORUS

## CHANTEY OF THE GRAND BANKS (*Cont.*)

Of music I've heard away in the lee  
The chimes of the churches ring;  
And brazen before us I've seen a big chorus  
Kick up in the air and sing.  
    I'd much rather feel than be a gale,  
    But a gale is the song for me!

### CHORUS

You can race your horses of high degree,  
Your autos and aeroplanes,  
Or watch men muddle through mud and puddle,  
And panting run down the lanes.  
    I'd much rather ship than be a ship,  
    But ships make the race for me!

CHORUS—Yo Ho! ye lubbers! Get over the rail!  
    The fisherman's going to sea;  
    And that's the place for a sailorman,  
    And that is what I be!

## THE HURRICANE

It hoards with Hunnish stealth a lethal blast;  
Betrays no secret of its vicious plan;  
With craft awaits "der Tag" when careless man  
Somnambulant in flaccid calm will cast  
His net to seaward, far beyond the last,  
And fails the azure heavens then to scan,  
Nor in the north to see the darkling van  
Of clouds.—It strikes! And Nature stands aghast!

A rush of wind, then, stinging hail will smite  
The land, while tortured sea and driving mist  
Assault stout oaken bark and sweep the deck.  
The typhoon vaunts its ego, vents its spite;—  
Consumes itself with savage howl and twist  
And leaves a wake of death and tragic wreck.

## SURF

A cinema of brine, and cadenced rune,  
Replete the soot-dimmed eye and yearning ear,  
That winter toil in teeming towns, and drear  
Bread-winning tasks have dulled to lesser tune.  
As into view unfolds the strand and dune,  
The marches of the tide, and sea cliffs, sheer  
And dark, above refulgent breakers clear  
As beryl,—the scene bequeaths a magic boon.

The salt-touched air, as wine, bestirs the blood;  
And waves, refluent in their serried race,  
Pounce on the rocks with frothy, creaming crest,  
And lave minute crustaceans with a flood  
That flags the fronded rock-weeds' languid grace:—  
The restlessness and murmur giveth rest.



UPON DRIVING AN AUTO AMONG THE  
ICE-BOUND FISHING VESSELS ON  
THE LA HAVE RIVER

Hibernal, ice-locked in an haven deep,  
A vessel dreams of miracles: of ship  
Hard pressed and tossed by sea and gale that strip  
Her spars; half foundered from wild waves that sweep  
The decks, and crew in famished, frosted sleep,—  
Lashed helpless by the hailstorm's cruel whip;—  
She staggered on,—a wreck,—unsteered, to slip  
At last through shoals, and safe to harbor creep.

Of phantom ships, she dreamed, and burning ice;  
Leviathans that stalked her many days,  
To pass in stink of oil and scorching souls,  
As lucky depth-charge made them pay the price;—  
And then, a car she sees, in wide amaze,  
That over land or water swiftly rolls!

## THE BEACH IN WINTER

I hear deep music roll, now low, now strong,  
So wend my way by shuttered cot and store  
That somnolent beseem to sigh and snore;  
Or doth a breeze but seek the summer throng,  
And mourn the laughing children of the long  
Bright days of August on the empty shore?  
Conjecturing I hasten to explore  
The welling diapason of the song.

Then lo! I come upon neglected friends!  
A crescent beach and singing boist'rous tide,  
With waves high-arched and sand whorls in a game  
That starting with creation never ends. . . .  
(A bit more hair upon my pampered hide,  
And winter sea and summer look the same.)

## THE LAUNCHING OF THE BLUENOSE

A wondrous ship was looming through the haze,  
New-carved from noble timber of the west  
That artisans of Acady their best  
Had given to shape a craft that would amaze  
The Yankee boat, which seeks in autumn days  
To hold the Herald Cup that should not rest  
In foreign lands. Hawk-like with haughty crest,  
She poised, all sleek and black, upon the ways.

While hammers tapped the blocks beneath her side,  
And people waited breathless, tense and hushed,  
The ocean, calm, still crooned its age-old song;  
Then, "Trip the shore!" the master builder cried.  
The bottle cracked, and toward the sea she rushed;  
And with her invocations of the throng!

## THE DERELICT

“How, then, did I become a wreck, you ask?  
It’s this way, Boss. My compass pointed West  
Instead of No’t’h; my charts were of the best,  
But some swab handed me a silver flask:  
It weren’t no rotten rum from out a cask. . . .  
And I read three for eight. . . you know the rest;  
It weren’t my fault, for she—he were my guest,  
And manners, Sir, is half a Captain’s task.  
I struck a hidden bar; it aint no lie,  
Boss; bars—they be for bums like me, or prince;  
And many is the blind bar I’ve struck since. . .  
The whole world’s wrong, and that’s my alibi.”

And sodden, it drifts in the fog to fade,  
A helpless menace in the tracks of trade.

## REINCARNATION

The cable snaps:—a wrenched soul cries aloud,  
“She’s lost!” Demonic seas with clutch and jeer  
Reclaim the ship, and as upon a bier  
Of brine, impel her helpless, once so proud,  
To hungry ledges, black and beetle-browed.  
She strikes! Then, gray and monstrous waves uprear  
Their ghastly foaming crests, and pounce and tear,  
And leave but oaken bones and tangled shroud.

With flags a-flying in a summer breeze,  
A virgin bark is poised for maiden flight,  
Resplendent in her paint and sweeping curves;—  
The bottle cracks!—Then swift, she glides with ease,  
And launches with a nodding bow polite,—  
As though an old acquaintance she observes.

## A POET BY THE SEA

A poet contemplates while tongues of tide  
Enwreath and lap his shining pedestal  
With gleaming froth; and after mystical  
Meanderings and whisperings that chide  
The barring crags, reluctantly they slide  
To vast and jeweled depths, so prodigal  
That Neptune's daughters, holding festival,  
Are loath to leave their kingly father's side.

Are poets' songs but little waves that run—  
Forever seeking a more lofty plane:  
Each surging thought to score a higher mark  
Upon the cliffs;—thence, leaving in the sun  
A few pure drops of beauty that are fain  
To fly as rainbowed mist through Heaven's arc?

## THE PLAIN OF THE MAYFLOWER

I have no hope, I feel no longer proud.  
Through snow and gale I've bounded out to sea  
And shouldered foaming crests right honestly;  
Full fares my only thought, and never cowed  
By rain or sleet or fog or ice or cloud;  
With verve I faced my task and merrily,  
To show the world how fishing ought to be,  
As deep winds laughed and thrummed my singing shroud.

They promised me a chance to win the cup  
If I could earn by toil a rightful place,  
Sustaining all traditions of the fleet:—  
And now I'm barred! Do I not measure up?  
I've done my work, and still I may not race!  
(Perchance "Bluenoses" indicate cold feet).

## THE CLIPPER

The Shenandoah could show her saucy heel  
To any ship that on the sea might dwell.  
Rounding Cape Horn a boy from maintop fell;  
I leaped to grasp from calloused hands the wheel.  
"Avast!" bawled Captain Jim with heave and reel;  
"What? Back my yards in this godblasted swell?  
Not much! Besides it's warmer down in hell.  
You touch a spoke, I'll haul you 'neath my keel!"

Now, eighty days from Sandy Hook "was great!"  
Quoth Captain Jim, and gave his pants a hitch:  
"We clewed no goddam sail from Horn to Gate;  
With fresh winds I can damned well sail the bitch!"

As each trip ended, and the dock I trod,  
I moored me tighter to the Grace o' God.





# Burlesque



## PAN-DEAN SONG

Praise God for this bright pannikin,—  
('Tis holy, you'll agree;)  
As panacea for burning tin,  
You steam the grub, you see.

Panada made in such a dish  
Will pander to his taste;  
Or rice potatoes, if you wish,  
In panegyric haste.

This pan is good for more than that  
When panned behind the scene,—  
If he won't buy you a new hat,  
Just pan him on the bean!

## SOVIET-CATABASIS

Back to the simple Carlovingian  
We fain would go. Yea, even that far back  
When love was free and land and meat and sack  
Were in abundance for the stronger man.  
Yet Charlemagne had laws—a cursed plan—  
That curbed and taxed and taught, nor did they lack  
Much irksome discipline. 'Twere freer pack  
In dynasty of Merovingian.

But wait! We find that there was Salic law!  
So we must search e'en farther in the past  
For our ideal—a life sans work or flaw;—  
The Caesars? Nay! And Egypt's toil was vast!—

For law we'd choose a club, and riotous  
With glee, we'd join old Pithecanthropus!

## REINCARNATION

They tell me once I thrummed a serenade  
To royal Greeks; and then before that time  
With hairy legs and pointed ears, a rime  
I piped upon the flute of Pan; then brayed  
My song, as Pithecanthropus arrayed,  
While tripping ape-girls of that Java clime  
Evolved the demi-tasse; and in the slime  
Of Preterozoic I may have played.

Now, if in other lives I lived as me,  
A lot of bad went with my little good;  
And if my music, quavering, then stood  
No truer toned than now, it should not be!  
I may have played the king, or played the deuce:—  
But wish no lives on me,—what is the use?

## ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN IN THE WOODS

A Scottish guide took Abe on his first trip.  
'Twas new to Abe: the stream, the trout they caught;  
And when his flies and line, so dearly bought,  
Festooned the trees, he hung his frugal lip;  
Hence when to pay Guide Sandy he did dip  
Into his buttoned pocket, he then sought  
To hold out for the gear he lost, and taught  
The canny guide not to expect a tip.

That eve did Sandy put Sport Abe in clover.  
He fed him he-brew punch not brewed for girls;  
'Twas free, so Abie's scalp grew brand new curls;  
Then Sandy asked him out and tipped him over!  
"O, safe me, blease!" yelled Abe; "here's ten for you!"  
'Twas thus a Jew tipped Scot, and Scot tipped Jew!

## PLANE JO KOSE THE GIDE OF ROSSIGNAW

I'm plane Jo Kose, the Gide of Rossignaw,  
As ignorant as all good gides should be,  
With skin the tuffest that you ever see,  
And roll me own and take a drink and chaw.

I gides the sport, and may-be-so his squaw,  
Though Emmy, that's the gurl what married me,  
Finds nothin' nice in women on a spree;  
But I like human nature in the raw!

It's grate to hear them sports discribe their speed  
At makin' dough or winnin' 'em a lass;  
To hear 'em tell it none moves in their class,  
Though most look like thay's somewhat gone to seed;  
But when thay tries to uplift me, I hide  
For them as lifts should be above a gide!



## ERIN GO BRAGH

There is a land beyont the ocean blue  
Where fields sprout sweeter grass for Bossy's cud,  
And hens and pigs can delve in richer mud  
Than ever spattered on an English shoe;  
And shure I am that faeries are there too,  
And shamrock, and colleen, and primrose bud,  
And paddies, and shillalahs, and red blood  
To sphill for ony cause that might be thrue.

And now she's free with nought to scrap about!  
Those bog-boys have been framing up the Dail!  
There'll be no chanct to twist the Lion's tail  
Or give an Ulster dude a friendly clout. . . .  
No more at landlord's head he'll toss a brick. . . .  
Ould Ireland is dead! . . . Long live the Mick!

## THE OWLS' NEST

A rum-red moon glowed pendant from the breast  
Of warm, portentous, midnight western sky;  
The pines swayed sleepily with nod and sigh,  
And silver lake the shadowed shore caressed.

An eerie wooded isle looms in the west,  
Its quiet shades no mischief prophesy;  
But mark those saucy stars! Each winks an eye!  
Can that still grove conceal a night bird's nest?

Forsooth, a yodle weird: "To-who. . .? To-who. .?"  
Calls from that isle, and echoes all about. . . .  
Quick! Hide the chickens for the owls are out!  
That cry, it fascinates: "To-you. . ! To-you. .!"  
To this snug nest all wise owls know the route  
For there they perch in pairs: "To-woo. .! To-hoot!"

## TO MY LADY'S 'IGHBROW

O, palpitating flow of Modern Thought  
That emanates from out my Lady's mind,  
That precludes vulgar housework and the grind  
Of raising little kiddies to be taught;—  
Why only in the female are you wrought?  
Are masculine conceptions, then, so blind  
That schemes for shirking work are disinclined  
To take root in my brain, though much besought?

Must one from séance drear to lecture roam  
To see a Bolsheviki chanticleer  
Defy the world, and on the rostrum foam;  
Then rush to hear some atheistic sneer?  
Why not then let the Uplift start at home;  
Replace Hot-air with Normal Atmosphere?

## LO! THE POOR ARTIST

When I consider how my paint is spent  
Portraying limply Nature's mighty store  
Of scintillating beauties, I deplore  
That merely slinging paint has been my bent.  
O, would I had the skill and the intent  
To make my mark in words,—a mighty score  
Of which is always free,—and rhymes galore.  
(Still sweet-tongued bards seem somewhat indigent.)

I daub my thoughts upon a canvas blank  
And strive to hold inspired tension high.  
With but four primary colors it is wrong  
To hope for shades of meaning that can rank  
With poets' flights, and words that versify;—  
(And yet HE sells his effort for a song.)

## FRACTURED RESOLUTIONS

As the New Year waxes and the Old Year wanes,  
And a memory of war is all that remains,  
Exit the Eagle and enter the Dove,  
And there is peace and plenty and brotherly love;  
You feel so grateful, unctious and good,  
That you renounce all sins that a mortal could.

You cut out cigars and the cigarette;  
You by-pass the cocktails and other things wet;  
You amputate habits of boastful talk;  
Instead of a taxi, resolve to walk;  
Cast no sly glances at twinkling silk;  
And instead of lobster,—plain crackers and milk.

Then swelled all up with righteous pride  
Amazed at your strength of mind, you tried  
To tell your friends what they should do  
To be as saintly and temperate too.  
And while trying your best for a Godly "rep."  
In gazing aloft, don't watch your step.

As the new ideas wane and the old ones wax,  
Your overstrained morals begin to relax;  
Exit the bluster, and enters quite humble  
The thought that a fellow might take a tumble;—  
With plenty of love and peace as well,  
You wake to the fact that,—*You're human as hell!*

## INSTINCT

A hawk soars searchingly, serene,  
    In sunlight, floating emptily;  
His crawl is flat, his sight is keen,—  
    He waits his chance thus airily.  
A rabbit darts athwart a fen;  
    A shadow flits menacingly;  
He pops into a sheltering glen;—  
    The hawk swoops upward haughtily.  
A wolf trots slanting up the wind,  
    His eyes a-hunting glowingly;  
Though unassailed by scent of hind,  
    He feels a meal right knowingly.  
A deer curled neath a hackmatack,  
    Her steel legs tensed suspiciously,  
With nose to wind and ears a-back;  
    She springs and runs propitiously.  
A spotted trout glides to a shoal,  
    His luncheon seeks portentously;  
From minnow plump to take his toll,  
    He'll sun himself pretendingly.  
A school of minnow,—foxy fish,—  
    Play and feed invitingly;  
They thwart the trout's voracious wish,  
    By shoreward darts,—most slightly.  
A Goodwife sits and sews a seam;  
    It's spring,—her Man distinctively  
Takes down his rod, begins to scheme;—  
    She packs his bag instinctively.

## I SOLD MY DOG

The sweetness cloyed, so to forego the sweet  
I needs must school my senses, long caressed  
And pampered by true love and greatly blest,  
To spurn those joys of which they were replete.  
I scorned the condiment and fain would cheat  
That thrilling titillation of the breast—  
That gratifying something which possessed  
My days and lavished roses at my feet.

I hunger now. The path winds steep and rough.  
I miss the gentle step and patient smile  
And honest eyes that loved nor ventured guile  
Though oft did I provokingly rebuff.  
Restore to me the hours so rich in joy  
And I will sip the sweet and crave the cloy.

## IN FLORIDA

The Cracker Girl, or so it's told to me,  
Is trained to hike before she learns to ride  
In auto cars, lest accident betide  
And she be late for breakfast or to tea.  
All honor hers! And canny though she be  
She, too, must learn to swim to save her pride  
Lest while canoeing her escort should chide  
Her with too little faith to walk the sea.  
Now if all girls could paddle a canoe,  
(And every girl should learn it, old or young)  
This song need never, *ever* have been sung,  
As all the boats have paddles built for two.  
So learn to paddle home those Tête-à-têters  
And you wont have to swim among the 'gators!



## A LASSIE LOVES THE SAILORS

A lassie loves the sailors, you'll agree,  
And sailors catch her eye on land or ship.  
If she (the latter) makes a little slip  
It is because she wished to go to sea.  
'Tis curious how ships and girls are free  
To lure a man to make the maiden trip,  
And if, perchance, her sails should get a rip,  
Why she (the former) tries to make the lee.  
A ship, or girl, a sailor thinks a gem,  
So now I make my point extremely plain;  
Though girlyies like the hazards of the main,  
It takes a sailor's hand to handle them.  
So boys just play at being nautical  
And capture both the good and naughty gal!

## CANOEING IN FLORIDA

Old Pithecanthropus was wont to take  
His girl a-boating perched upon a log;  
And later men, less hirsute, used a dog  
To glide o'er glacier or frozen lake.  
Then buggy-riding with the village rake  
Made every girl start flirting for a jog.  
The tandem bike set chaperones agog  
Till autos came and took the blooming cake!  
Now girls can walk, and parking sometimes bores,  
So boys must find another trick that's new.  
I wonder they don't launch a bright canoe  
And paddle them along the tropic shores.  
But how can they then try canoedlin'  
With no canoes to thus canoedle in?

## LENINE-TROTSKY ETC.

A gray ape leers with sly irreverent grin,  
'Mid sighing fronds of a once royal palm;  
Secure he feels in storm or sunny calm  
For he sits loftier than all his kin.  
The tallest perch and toughest, hairy skin,  
The biggest mouth, has he, and longest arm  
To pick a cocoanut to eat, or harm  
A monk that might essay his tree to shin.

So there he squats and shakes his borrowed throne,  
While bodies of still grinning apes adorn  
The ground among the broken "nuts" forlorn:  
In all the grove they hail him Boss—alone!  
On white man's axe this monk doth never dwell,  
Nor how the tree will fall in spite of Hell!

## AND THERE YOU ARE!

She said I did not love her any more:  
That I was mostly brute, and the small part  
Of man about me had no sense of art;  
And then she cried and pointed to the door!  
I did not wish to go but I felt sore,  
And so with halting steps I made a start  
As if to leave her, though with heavy heart  
Beneath the air of injury she wore.

Though ousted I'd not done a single thing.  
I'd simply said she ought to curl her hair,  
And "Mary Smith is quite a pretty lass."  
"If any girls, why not my praises sing?"  
She archly asked with deprecating air;  
And then I told her to look in the glass!

## REPLY TO JOHN HAYNES HOLMES

“What is my malady?” a scribe demands:  
And then he boasts that he still loves his wife,  
And eighteen married years of worldly strife  
Cool not an ardor that unchallenged stands.  
He claims to thrill at touch of practised hands,  
(The same old digits that direct his life,  
Or loot the till when shopping tours are rife)  
And swears he chafes not at the marriage bands.

He Lawrence finds, and Anderson, too free;  
A devil's hatch, “The Triumph of the Egg.”—  
So, Egotist, you wonder if 'tis plague?  
I diagnose your case: Pomposity!  
Unadvertised, some others also live  
By grace of patient wives, superlative.

## TO BYNG OF VIMY

Not Vimy, General, that made you great—  
'Twas you who made that riddled ridge redound  
To strategy acclaimed the world around,  
While British guns with Huns did arbitrate.  
'Tis not your nerve we would commemorate,  
For song and story, British grit, resound,  
And Tommies at the front were ever found.  
(They also served who had to stand and wait).

I make this gesture to your steady smile:—  
When sense of duty to the State each day  
Demands its pound of flesh, you laugh and pay,  
And meet the folk at every door and stile.  
When they right in your face your praises sing,  
I'll bet you'd rather hear the bullets, Byng!

## A FLAPPER FLOPPED

A flapper flapped before chicks more mature.  
She ruffed her downy plumes and clucked a boast  
That she was tough, and capons she could roast  
As well as hens, or game-cocks slyly lure.  
She clucked a risqué song with smile demure,  
And claimed her soul was on a downhill coast  
Where chicken livers *en brochette* are toast  
For one who fancies nothing true and pure.

She chirped a ribald lay of china eggs,  
And how she'd feed the hatch a rubber worm;  
'Twas all dark meat that graced her gamey form,  
And foxy jazz was brooded by her legs.  
Strutting her lines, her own eyes fairly popped!  
She gulped two drinks, and then the flapper flopped!

## HUNGER

No poet should owe fealty to flesh;  
Although he lives not long enough to sing  
A song whose tones around the sphere may ring,  
He cannot fish to eat with rainbow mesh.  
Suppose a bark too frail for windward thresh,  
With anchor up it still might tidings bring  
To some lee cove. They also serve who fling  
Aloft one haunting note, unhawked and fresh.

The work that sucked my brain and sapped my brawn,  
For which I looted stars and pearly dawn  
And clover-scented nights, and strove and prayed,  
They seldom print, and I am little paid.  
Had God my thirst it need not be allayed!  
Would that my hungry vitals could be drawn!



## GREEN-ITCH VILLAGE

I've found a pirate town just of my heart  
Where artists live, and love, and bob, and paint,  
And strive,—quite unaffected by the taint  
Of sordid patrons of the common mart:  
Of Green-itch Village, then, I would impart  
Some secrets of its lairs and customs quaint.  
They lave in the same tub, without complaint,  
The salad and themselves, and that's high art!

They daub and draw their breath, and drape the ear,  
Inhale spaghetti and the cigarette,  
Sleep three a-bed for warmth and atmosphere,  
And never *have* bowed to convention yet. . . .  
A sketch, a cot,—compose a studio,  
And suckers come and suckers wiser,—go!

AFTER READING SHAKESPEARE'S 154TH  
SONNET

Dan Cupid long ago lay fast asleep,  
And left exposed his heart-inflaming brand,  
While maids that knew but pure chaste lives to keep  
Went laughing by. But in her lily hand  
The boldest hesitated,—grasped the torch  
That legions of the flapper world had warmed;  
Unmindful that a tiny spark might scorch,  
She hoped to play with fire and go unharmed.

She tried to quench this brand of sleeping Prince  
In cooling moss-curbed well of shady place.  
The well blazed high before Love's fiery grace,  
And, heated, has been burning ever since.  
(She plunged it in the well to see it smoke,  
And many lovers, later, saw the joke!)

## CASH

A moi! thou filthy cash and redolent!  
A moi! thou spotted lucre that the mob  
Begrimes itself to snatch, nor spurns a daub  
Of gore on thee, and knows thee eloquent,  
If cleaner notes are shy for increment.  
I need thee, want thee, but deign not to rob  
Or mulct my friend, and bear his curse and sob;  
I want thee fair, and nothing to repent.

With all thy sins and faults I love thy skill  
At easing ways that otherwise are hard,  
And shaping keys for locks on every door  
That leads to knowledge or to joy and thrill;  
If I for ay could win thy fond regard,  
I'd spend thee as wert never spent before.

Yuletide



## OFF WITH THE OLD AND ON WITH THE NEW

### OLD YEAR

Begone! thou shabby wench of aged mien!  
Dost think by yellow grin and wrinkled lear  
To keep me faithful yet another year,—  
And thou an arid waste, and cold and lean?  
Begone! I say. In truth, I am less keen  
For thee, and daily more inclined to sneer  
As I recall how thou didst domineer  
And boldly snatch from me with bribe unclean.

### NEW YEAR

O, welcome! thou resplendent child of light!  
Thou bearest gifts of promise and of fame.  
With all my love and fortune I will woo  
And win thy virgin heart, as of my right;  
Then, soar with thee, transported by thy flame!—  
I thus discard the Old and claim the New.

## CHRISTMAS—1920

I greet thee, friend!—This birthday of the One  
Who died that we might live and laugh and hail  
In peace each soul we pass upon the trail  
Is time to smile and stand beneath the sun;  
Yea, smile, and as a golden web is spun  
Of sunshine, believe with me it doth avail  
That Hallowed Cross there was and Holy Grail  
So men may live and God's good will be done.

May thou see nymphs and merry satyrs prance,  
And no black beast, when toiling by life's stream!  
I hope as thou in magic ways doth peer  
And play, thou'lt see the silver fairies dance  
In the moonlit path of thy dazzling dream!  
I greet thee with best wishes for the year!

## CHRISTMAS—1921

At Christmastide on you a gift worth while  
I would bestow. The day good deeds prevail,  
Would you the hollied bowl of spiced wassail  
Imbibe with me? Or happily beguile  
The time with jewels from a coral isle?  
Or like Sir Walter, the sweet fumes inhale  
Of ripe old Burley? Or might posies frail  
And rare bring to your kindly face a smile?

But no, I'll proffer this with all my heart!  
The Wish to Smile right joyfully, my friend!  
If this poor means attain such worthy end,  
'Tis I of your largess will share a part.  
Can you but smile when looking in their eyes,  
Your fellows will such gift immortalize!



## CHRISTMAS—1922

Again I sense the flight of Santa's sleigh,  
The thud of dancing hoofs on icy tiles  
As town to town they spurn the frosty miles,  
Or arch from star to star their flashing way.  
The mistletoe and holly and sweet bay,  
The jumping-jacks and candies in great piles,—  
I shake my cap and bells and join the smiles!—  
“What gift need you?” did I hear some one say?

Is it largess I crave in gift or giving?  
Is it the rainbow's hue or pot of gold?  
Is it the chime that charms or silver bell?  
Is it my life I love or is it living?  
Sometimes 'tis this and sometimes that I hold,  
But I need most that you should wish me well.

## CHRISTMAS—1923

I ponder oft the festive joy I see  
When temple bells are ringing and the thrill  
Of Christmas permeates the winter's chill  
With surges warm of generosity.

They celebrate the Christ Nativity?  
Ah, yes! What impulse then may that distill  
In you? I know not, nor what wish fulfill;  
So let me tell you what it means to me.

It means I'm never lonely in my shack,  
Though winter brawl beneath the Christmas skies;  
A pageant of gay faces all the while  
Parades before my mind and takes me back—  
They have the gift of giving in their eyes;  
And you are by my camp-fire and you smile.

## CHRISTMAS—1924

Were wishes autos, beggars then might ride;  
(A modern cynic may, the proverb, turn)  
Yet wishing is a sport no one will spurn  
And even kings may wish at Christmastide.  
Old Croesus was a pauper when beside  
His cash you pile my wishes and discern  
The castles in the air where I sojourn;  
And having much, with you I would divide.

I wish that you could see a snowy night  
At Rossignol, from out my cabin door;  
The glow within, and dancing on the floor  
The memories, like elves, in the fire light.  
I wish you retrospection that may cheer  
And Merry Christmas and a fine New Year!

## CHRISTMAS—1925

Though static mar the merry-making din  
Which haply fills the air at Christmas time  
And you are surfeited with song and chime  
Or wassail from a golden cannikin,  
I still may broadcast in the hope to win  
A quiet place for this, my modest rhyme:—  
I wish for you, as up the steep you climb,  
When years tune out, may you each year tune in!

Although the Lakes of Rossignol are far  
From hearth you honor with your Christmas cheer,  
My own Yule Log will bring you very near  
Though it should burn in gleam of distant star.  
Thus, should I feast 'neath palm or snowy pine,  
I trust the Guide may lead your trail to mine.

## CHRISTMAS—1926

Like restless spirits years thus flicker by. . . .  
It seems I had my breakfast New Year Day  
In scented June, my lunch, with scant delay;  
Now Christmas beckons me to goose and pie.  
"All is not food that sparkles!" you may cry,  
But Yuletide viands look so fine and gay,  
A wee ache here and there but aids the play,  
And that which gluts the paunch may fit the eye.

Spiritual fantasia may be,  
But brawn it takes my swift canoe to speed  
And lead to down the deer on which I feed.  
(I'll trade two ghosts for one reality).  
Good spirits thine! These are my Christmas wishes;  
And while you quaff, may spirits wash the dishes!

## THIS YULETIDE

1927

As pipe smoke weaves, I'll waft to you a song  
In lieu of grasping your so ready hand:  
Had I my way, true friends from all the land  
Would gather at my board, so wide and strong,  
While wit and flowing bowl the feast prolong  
At Christmas time. Ay! Give to me a band  
Of humans fraught with faults, who understand  
There is a cosmic scheme and they belong.

I sing the man who smiles out on the river,  
Or Rossignol, that lake of Micmac lure;  
I sing the girl who finds the waters pure,  
Nor wonders if they stop or go forever.

Why stammer over steeple, stole or styles  
While friends there are and timber-templed aisles?

## MERRIE CHRISTMAS—1928

Ensconced on fireside settle I recline  
And doze and bid the driving blizzard howl,  
Nor scarce awake at eerie hoot of owl  
Or snap of frost within my logs of pine.  
Contemptuous of life or timbered shrine  
The storm roars on—and wraps with ghostly cowl  
The sly trails where the summer woodfolk prowl  
And alder swamps wherein the cow moose whine.

“Christmas is here!” I waken with a start;  
An Elf springs out, a mouse-furred vagabond,  
His cap in hand and hand upon his heart;  
“Behold your friends!” he grins and waves his wand.

A cinema of faces then I see—  
But yours bestirs my Yuletide memory!

# Rhymed Philosophy





## INTERLUDE

As I look down the avenue of years,  
Palm-sheltered here, with there a brooding pine  
Casting black shadows on this trail of mine,  
I marvel at the weeds and pools of tears  
And wonder if those ancient pioneers  
Who blazed it for me had more shade than shine  
Of sun to guide them toward that swift decline  
I rush to reach, and reaching view with fears.

Not fear of Charon's craft nor dismal croon;  
Only the inscrutable cosmic plan  
Daunts me, lest trail beyond, by stalwarts hewn,  
I miss, nor measure to the mail of man.  
But there! The vista softens. Comrades call  
A welcome to a feast in Odin's Hall!

AS JO KOSE, THE ROSSIGNOL GIDE,  
WOULD DO IT

Say, Pards, when I looks back along the trail  
I've travelled goin' on nigh fifty year  
And thinks upon the logs and rotten gear  
I druve 'em with in cataract and gale,  
I feels like a old boat with mildewed sail  
And only a split oar with which to steer:  
Yessir! some river skiff tied to a pier  
That's safe, pervided you knows how to bail.

I wonders howinhel I has gut by  
Without a wreck or losin' of my way,  
And how I still can look 'em in the eye  
When many a time a eye-lash saved the day.  
But why look back when out ahead I see  
A bunch of dang good buddies callin' me?

## AN INDIAN'S IDEA OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

By storied lake I tinkered my old car  
When Ma-tee-o, the Micmac, passed to view  
The weather signs: for each sweet breeze that blew,  
The sun and clouds, composed his calendar.  
In sport I questioned him of things afar,  
While he watched me drill out a twisted screw:—  
“What of this League of Nations? Is it true  
That President may smoke with King and Czar?”

“My fathers had a league: it was as dust,”  
He said; “when instincts turned to greed and lust.  
No men can sire braves from evil hearts,  
Nor build a good machine with faulty parts.”  
Thus spake the shadow of an ancient race;  
He coughed and passed—a wise light in his face.

## THE COTTAGE

A thousand eager memories allay  
The mundane worries as 'mid oak trees tall  
I spy the cottage that a home for all  
Has stood through joy and years by night and day.  
Lovers beneath the moon's indulgent ray  
There were, and babes, and fluffy pets to maul;  
Parents, grannies, cousins and folk who call;  
And some have passed, and some were wrenched away.

And in the portal now so fair to see,  
My queenly sisters wave and make me glad;  
Father greets son with high mistaken pride,  
And they encourage me to boast of me.  
As by the fire we chat of lass and lad,  
I feel those others smiling at my side.

## A FAIRY LAUGHS

A gilded bird within a golden cage!  
In truth the bright free air beyond, it sees,  
While I my pristine needs can scarce appease,  
And stifle 'mid brick walls in sullen rage.

Betwixt a truant eye and ill-faced page  
A delicate green tracery of trees  
Intrudes and gently sways as from a breeze  
Warm-spiced with clover, peppermint and sage.

Some wee thing taps the windows of my soul;  
It taps a gentle code as though to friend;  
My mind is crooked to clutch its daily dole,  
So dully grasps but fails to comprehend,  
Till something bids my frown to casement rise,  
And there a Fairy laughs straight in my eyes!

## TO A FRIEND

### SI DIIS PLACET

I met along the trail one winter's day  
A hunter brave with sweat upon his brow,  
And pack so heavy that it made him bow;  
'Till him I met I'd cursed the rocky way.  
His eyes were pained; I saw him strain and sway.  
I spoke: "Good Sir, my help, will you allow?  
Your pack is bulkier than mine, I vow."  
He braced himself and smiled, and gestured, "Nay.  
No sympathy I crave. I must decline;  
But your respect I cherish more than gold;  
So let us each his burden strongly hold.  
You carry your own pack and leave me mine."

He stoutly passed. Beyond the forest shade  
I heard him laugh at welts the pack-strap made.

## TO THE WORLD PACIFISTS

Ambition ever helped man in his stride;  
Though not achieved, possessing it, he won;  
Endeavoring to fly he learned to run,  
And emulating Centaurs did he ride.  
He swam because he craved the waves to glide;  
And failing bolts of Jove, he built a gun;  
Thus, silken pelt he coveted, so spun  
The wool and flax and gold cloth for his bride.

He raised a tower tall to reach the sky,  
Then found within himself the heaven he sought;  
With skill thus gained he since has wisely wrought,  
And longing for the stars he learned to fly.

So point your arrow up and, mayhap, soon,  
In aiming for the sun you'll nick the moon!



## A TOAST TO THE PLAYERS

A toast, Comrades! Ye wielders of the pen!  
Just kiss the cup and pledge it from the heart!  
Thy pens are stout but there be other art  
More versatile of which we little ken.  
Ye dare deny? What of the Players, then—  
Those genii who the smile or tear can start?  
Man in his time may play a varied part,  
But Players play the parts of many men.

So come, a pledge, I say, to mimicry!  
To artists who invoking Heaven, the jeers  
Of gallery-gods may bear, and still not mar  
The play for more discerning sympathy;  
Who, laughing, may not weep though moved to tears,  
Nor stay the cosmic setting of a star.

## QUESTING

Singing I gazed at an azure sky;  
A great Thought arrowed waywardly,  
Winging its way beyond the blue:  
Its fate sought it right hungrily.

Preaching, I tried in unctious mood  
The soul to shrive by theurgy;  
Teaching the prayer of orthodox,  
The goal receded mystically.

Yearning, I glimpsed a fleeting light:  
Too weak to grasp convincingly;  
Learning at last the Goal was just  
To seek, though not discerningly.

## PITHECANTHROPUS—THE JAVA APE-MAN

Before entombed in storied rocks, his race  
O'erran the Trinil land of gentle clime;  
Of shaggy mien, erect he walked, sublime;  
No Simian he,—yet with prehuman face  
Expressed his joy or anger with grimace;  
He knew no fire, nor subterfuge, nor crime;  
With eolith he slew beasts of his time,  
And lived by right of might and Nature's grace.

Mayhap the spirits of the Pleistocene  
The efforts of our sages will deride  
As they exhume a skull or femur lean  
To herald and parade with ghoulish pride;—  
For Ape-men like the modern wisemen keen  
Just strove and ate, and laughed and loved,—and died.

## INSPIRATION

O, ladye faire and belted knight of arms  
Parading past the window of my mind;  
The jungles, and the icebergs, and the wind  
Of scorched Sahara, and the verdant palms,  
The salt sea waves, and earthquakes' vast alarms,  
A holocaust, an engines whirr and grind,  
A boy, a girl, a beast, a mother kind:—  
A cinema that challenges and charms.

I'm surfeited with rich abundant lore,  
Yet loricated by a sluggish brain,  
The mixture will not fuse nor yet avail  
To link or fit in plot or metaphor,  
Till white-hot inspiration welds a chain  
Of fancy that creates a wondrous tale !

## WERE T'OTHER DEAR CHARMER AWAY

My country! Southern land where I was born;  
With sunlit pastures and assuasive air;  
Its scintillating cities with their rare  
Exotic arts and graces that adorn  
Each conclave of the Muses,—I bemourn  
The duties that impelled me far from there;—  
Its Star Be-spangled Banner, rippling, fair,  
Still waves in freedom, e'en though battle-torn!

Yet, having quaffed the philter of the snow  
And harked the pibroch of the westing Scot,  
Beheld the Habitant and Micmac Band,  
And scented spruce and seen the torrents flow,  
And made true friends,—I'll gladly cast my lot  
With Canada: I'll grasp her proffered hand!

## THE WELL AT GRAND PRÉ

Long years ago a Norman peasant came  
In Acadie to live, or so 'tis sung,  
(Meg-am-a-gee 'twas called in Micmac tongue)  
And builded him a cote; nor seeking fame  
Nor glory, dug a well, that man or dame  
Or fair Evangeline, so blithe and young,  
Could draw cool water by the pail that swung  
From willow sweep, a-nodding in its frame.

The farmer builded better than he knew;  
As fashioning the rustic curb of stone,  
Or oaken bucket, how could he foretell  
That from his handiwork there would ensue  
Such fame of storied song, so rich in tone,  
That half the world, athirst, would seek his well?

## A TOAST—IN MEMORIAM

Gentlemen rise, to this toast in rhyme!  
We have lost a pal before her time;  
Steadfast to friends, a heart true-blue,—  
The best little sport we ever knew;—  
Here's to you, Lu!

Her mother was first in every thought;  
Her friends came next: to them she brought  
A dazzling smile and a witty quip;  
Wished nought for herself but a hearty grip,  
And Life's cup to sip.

Honest herself and unafraid,  
She sat in a game where the Reaper played,—  
Played her last hand,—a crooked deal,—  
Which the Reaper dealt, her fate to seal;  
She didn't squeal.

As the Great Adventure wafts her away  
To the Golden Gate, to Saint Peter she'll say:—  
"Hello, Pete, Old Top, will you let me through?"  
From Pete:—"We're looking for girls like you,—  
Come on in, Lu!"

## IMMORTALITY (?)

Whence springs the postulate of immortality?  
Motive low, as self-seeking egotist?  
(Hence wings for angels or horns for deviltry!)  
To live, as self, forever to exist?

The postulate may spring from motives worthy,  
Conceived by psychic ever-groping man  
To dominate his earthly life: who wisely  
Perceived the basic good in Cosmic Plan.



## A CAMP-FIRE TOAST

(IN MEMORIAM T. R.)

Gentlemen up! while we drink a toast  
To a Hunter from mountain, desert and coast;  
A true-blue sport, whose life has sped,  
Where better hunting will greet his lead;  
Here's to you, Ted!

Blessed with a heart as warm as the sun,  
Quick on the trigger, but full of fun,  
Strong as an oak, straight as a line;  
He met defeat without a whine;  
Our hearts repine.

The Pipe of Peace or his Hat in the Ring,—  
'Twas the same to him,—he had his fling,  
And set a standard true and fair  
For American men who do and dare;  
Rugged and square!

No molly-coddle could follow the trail  
He blazed, nor quitters nor pikers frail;  
From Seat of Power or cow-pony's back,  
He'd give you a lift with part of your pack;  
Nor courtesy lack.

He's gone to the Happy Hunting Ground,  
With Old Guide Peter to show him 'round;  
As under the stars, our blankets spread,  
We invoke his spirit to guard our bed;  
We toast you, Ted!

## CHRISTENDOM

Chaos had reigned, while human eras passed;  
Man worshipped idols, craving an ideal  
No earthly gods could conjure for his zeal;  
The truth for him, a vague idea too vast.  
Idolator, destined to stare aghast  
At death, he was, and in confusion kneel  
Until the Star of Bethlehem reveal  
The dawn of Christ, the great iconoclast.

False idols fell, and with the hallowed birth  
Came love to lighten grief and leaven fears;  
Imaged as man, and by men sacrificed,  
The Magic of the manger swept the earth.

The world grows sweeter as that sandaled Christ  
With eyes ablaze strides towering down the years.



## THE WAKE

Alert I chose to try the wings of life:  
Through cloud and sun and stars I hurled at speed!  
On Pegasus I dared to spur the steed  
To leap to dizzy heights and dangers rife;  
Astride a dragon black I joined the strife  
To halt the spectre of most dreadful need,  
And snatch from others with primordial greed,  
A loaf, a robe, a couch, a nod,—a wife.

As on the good ship's rail in thought I lean  
To scan the silver wake that lies astern,—  
A spotless trail of work well done and sure,—  
And see the gulls like angels, white and pure,  
That soaring watch as though our course to learn,—  
I pray my trail may be as straight and clean!

## AN INVITATION TO MARS

Ho! Men of Mars! your firmament we scan  
With daring eyes, and wonder if perchance  
Your star is like to ours. Do daisies dance  
In summer winds to pipes of merry Pan?  
Are there great temples for the Martian man,  
And fetes, and song, and nymphs of ardent glance?  
And do you live in cave or sunny manse?  
To know, must *we* the cold blue ether span?

The ruddy face of such a brilliant star  
Denotes a hospitality of sorts:  
As though you lived and thrived in the bright glare  
Of sun, and welcomed others from afar.  
But we invite you to *our* homes and courts:—  
Bridge ye the space you beckon us to dare!

## ICARUS

Ephemeral Atom painted on the blue  
Far distant canvas of the morning sky!  
It seems in flight and thus intrigues the eye,—  
Looms quickly larger,—but to dip from view  
In fleecy cloudlets formed by sun-touched dew;  
From whence it darts, its size to magnify  
An hundred-fold; we only then descry  
A wingéd man who would a star-trail hew.

He soars! He loops-the-loop in ecstasy!  
A tail-spin! Then, a nose-dive to the ground,—  
Not yet! He flattens; and, as drifting froth,  
He skims and lights; and, then derisively,  
He blows a wisp of smoke, and grins around;—  
And lo! His wings are fragile as a moth!

## MOTHERHOOD

To thwart good Nature's laws in wisdom planned  
Is but to shirk and loaf with vision dim,  
Forswearing duty to the race with prim  
False modesty, or "ideals" that are grand  
As an excuse for flouting God's command;  
Just like the dunce who sat upon a limb  
And sawed it off between the tree and him,  
Unthinking of the place where he would land.

To fly about and set the stars to rights  
Is quite a task for wings Icarian,  
Attached to one who tries to reach the sky,  
Eschewing simple earth and its delights.  
A sweeter toil it were to mother man,  
And later take a gift of wings and fly.

## SAND AND WATER

A drop of water sparkles on the ground,  
Its path disputed by a grain of sand;—  
“From me is formed the surging ocean grand!”  
“And me He used to make the whole world round!”  
“But I, when rippling, make a tinkling sound!”  
“And I compose the seashore’s yellow strand!”  
“And I to cloud and silver mist expand!”  
“In me bright jewels and red gold are found!”

Thus boast the idle atoms of a star,  
Unheeding and unstirred by enterprise,  
Till boundless zeal of *genus homo* drill  
Them from their slothful beds;—and flung afar  
As energy and concrete, bridle-wise,  
Like giant pards, they chariot his will.

## CREATION

Eons ago vast writhing masses flew  
Athwart the void in hurtling disarray,  
Like some Titanic cubist's mad display  
If he in frenzied dream a picture drew;  
Leviathans of gas,—they swelled and grew,—  
Consuming other monsters in the way  
Until they met in Jovian affray  
Far greater clouds that no direction knew.

Yet in this infinite turmoil there crashed  
And fused a hoard of atoms, knowing not  
That 'twas a well blazed trail they blindly trod,  
And in the fusing stars were born and flashed  
To whirl in orbits to the rhythm hot  
Of one great Vital Force we know as God!



## ROBIN HOOD

(ALIAS DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS)

A Templar, high resolved, strides forth to sing  
Of maidens fair and England's day of might;  
We gaze with awe on castle, joust and Knight  
And Lincoln-green and shaft of grey goose wing;  
We jeer the gross ill-manners of a King,  
Then laud his prowess as his staff doth smite  
A lusty Friar in a Sherwood fight;  
And statecraft hath a most familiar ring.

The magic of stout Albion's Heraldry!  
Hot fusing of the Anglo-Saxon race,  
When Robin's men held fast its hard won place  
As arbiter of worth and liberty!  
From Saxon, Dane and Scot the race was spawned. . .  
And now a Yankee Douglas waves the wand!

## AFTER READING THOMPSON'S ESSAY ON SHELLEY

He conjures up star-trimmed Olympic toys  
Wrought from the fabric of a Universe,  
Created only that they might immerse  
In ecstasies the souls of Delphic boys.  
What magic tricks are these, expressing joys  
And pretense? Ah! There is a sun-filled purse,  
And here is Aphrodite dressed to nurse  
The Twins; and Dian now the Swan decoys!

The luminous imagery of his prose  
Is poetry surpassing Shelley's best:  
He snatched a piece from sunset-reddened skies  
And flagged a comet,—mounted and arose  
To chase the angels in his headlong quest,—  
For they to him were golden butterflies.

## BROADWAY

Like ants that strive for sugar on the floor,  
Of tiny rushing Things I see a throng,  
All squeaking as they shove their way along,  
Each fancies it alone creates the roar.  
This trail of stinking cab and mounting score,  
This mart of human nonsense with its song  
Of hokum, soak 'em, rouge and brazen gong,  
Is like a gaming-house with bolted door.

Around, around, the frenzied inmates teem,  
As sweating, cheating, hot, they win and fail:  
One mind, one soul, is scattered 'mongst them all.  
For speed, I'd choose a wind-swept rapid stream,  
And hemlocks, rich, to kindly pad my trail;  
For noise,—bold Aspotogan's water-fall.

## A CANADIAN LUMBERMAN ON FIFTH AVENUE

As on a log I ride the surging sluice:  
A-top a bus that ponderously works  
And winds its way with urgent bumps and jerks,  
Then darts ahead freed from the eddies' noose;  
And now the cars are jammed like logs of spruce  
On my old stream; but in the current lurks  
A traffic lumber-jack who knows its quirks:  
He nods! The drive moves on swiftly and loose.

I feel as but one tiny drop of blood  
Spilled in the roaring rapids of the world.  
Do they surmise why they through space are hurled,—  
These throngs that plod the bank, with eyes in mud?  
Are Jew and Gentile, Prince and Vagabond  
But seeking out a trail to the Beyond?

## WAMBA THE FOOL

The Northern Bard depicts proud squire and dame,  
Brave archers, priests, and kings in all their might,  
The panoply of war and heralds bright,  
Escutcheons and device; the tilting game  
For men of iron, fierce with eyes aflame,  
Careering at grim death in mad delight,  
That lady's smile award their dazzling flight,  
Or gracious sob deplore their fall from fame.

Grand people all and souls of chivalry!  
But who advised the king and sought no place?  
Who risked his life to save a friend his lass?  
Who served, nor judged, and gazed to Calvary,  
And won the lists without a lance or mace?  
'Twas Wamba,—with the jawbone of an ass!

## I YEARN THE MUSES

I yearn the Muses of Olympus' Hall;  
I would invoke Apollo might he deign  
To vest in me a skill I dare attain  
To make a beggar smile, or queen, my thrall.  
Could I but charm sly Pan and Dryads all,  
In sylvan dells I'd play and ever reign  
As Prince of Merriment and Glad Refrain:  
I would I were a magic rossignol!

Not that I wish the majesty of might,  
Nor yet the fealty of equal souls,  
Nor, even poor man's pay, or rich man's doles;  
To create happiness I crave the right.  
I feel the phrase but cannot reach the note.  
O, that I had a skylark's golden throat!

## THE VIMY MEMORIAL MONUMENT

Beyond the emerald, pale mist I see:  
Contoured to drape the mantles of the field,  
The tender breasts of hills are there revealed  
In fullness of the peasant husbandry;  
And sky as blue as only sky can be  
In sunny France. 'Twas here the sword to wield  
In red defence that brothers stood to shield  
From raping Hun both home and family.  
And there on distant hill-top seem to sway  
Two shining spirits brooding o'er the fate  
Of those who tossed the Torch and broke the lance.

The spirits pass. My lips unbidden pray;  
Two Pylons stand, like nuns, to dedicate  
The Brotherhood of Canada and France.

## THE IMMIGRANT

From tribesmen bred who in a time were great:  
Who had their Alexanders and their Czars,  
Their Cleopatra, Doges, and their Shahs;  
They seek our land to better their estate:  
From countries ravaged by a Kaiser's hate,  
And kingdoms taxed by gun and scimitar,  
They hail our flying banner from afar,  
And sanctuary find within our gate.

They come in hope; we turn them not away;  
Yet harbored in this motley human blend  
Is dirk and bomb and lust,—and devil's thrall  
Who, sapient with doctrines of decay,  
Would tear down what he does not comprehend.  
And Liberty still stands to welcome all!



## PROMISE

I prithee dwell not on the turgid pools  
And mud-roiled shallows of the year now past:  
The year that like a stream its flotsam cast  
Upon the rocks, or whirled as useless tools  
In sad review its blind, its halt, its fools,  
In never ending eddies to the last;  
Curse not the stones that made thee stand aghast  
When thou asked bread of one of these new "Schools."

Look forward, brother! There a light will shine  
For thee, and mayhap, this glad day is born  
The chance to use mistakes that thou didst dare  
As guides to a success most justly thine:  
The future bright! And may thy sins forlorn  
Of yesteryear turn all to jewels rare!

## FIRE

A-sputtering and pouring up the chimney  
In glee the fire gobbles up the logs;  
Although the murky night is wet and windy,  
The fuel burns the brighter on the dogs.  
(I wonder if the flame still flickers just the same  
As when it scorched the Micmac on the bogs?)

Hot curling tongues are licking up the birch-bark,  
Puffing little tentacles of smoke;  
It tosses tiny hand-grenades of red spark,—  
Shoots up pretty rockets when I poke.  
(I wonder if such heat made fierce old Huns retreat  
When burning Belgian babies for a joke!)

Now belching smoke and flaring to the dark night,  
Throwing mystic shadows as they slip  
Up through the yawning gullet in their swift flight,—  
The flames pretend to frolic as they dip.  
(I wonder how 'twould be if one were out at sea  
And heard them roaring skyward from the ship?)

Careering and high-leaping in the fireplace,  
Darting tongues are striving hard to lave  
With hot destructive fluid every brick-face,—  
Fierce at their confinement, hiss and rave.  
(I wonder did it play in that far ancient day  
When it warmed old Pithecanthropus's cave?)

The fire died.—I watched the ashes blowing  
Little red-hot showers as they fell;—  
Gazed deeply into embers softly glowing;  
Then the church clock tolled the midnight bell.—  
(I wonder at the plan for making any man  
Live here awhile, then die,—and go to Hell.)

## THE RAINBOW

I hunted for the Pot of Gold,  
And by a wraith was kissed;  
The treasure trove I tried to hold,  
And grasped but tinted mist.

I spied a pool beneath a tree—  
A shining silver birch——  
Old Glooscap there smiled up at me:  
“The thrill is in the search.”

## BALANCE

A surplus here and there a dearth,  
The joy of love, the pain of birth,  
The heat of youth, the cold of death,  
The winter frost, then Spring's sweet breath;

First callowness then wise old age:  
For every fool we find a sage.  
We meet with nerve the testing Fates,  
And happiness predominates!

## GOLDEN SLIPPERS

(A NEGRO SPIRITUAL)

“Dem golden slippers” sing a song of hope;  
Those simple Afric children of the sun  
Are not alone by “spirituals” won;  
I too,—and thou, perchance?—for comfort grope.  
That melody was not prescribed by pope  
Or priest as balm for laity or nun;  
But from such lilting notes are anthems spun  
That flout those hymns which limit psychic scope.

“Dem golden slippers” opens wide a door  
To limitless imaginings of mind  
Which on such “golden stairs” to stars have climbed—  
(No soul, denying sentiment, may soar).  
Dance on, dear folk, with spirit-wingéd feet,  
Nor wait that *tout ensemble* of “golden street”.

## THE PROSPECTOR

(In answer to Helen Coleman's Sonnet expressing  
pity for same)

Serrate against the blue, the snow caps gleam,  
And daring, ever call out to his soul;  
So hence he toils and gladly pays the toll  
Imposed by guardians of reef and stream;  
Those altitudes and storms which bar and seem  
But to create a zest to reach the goal.  
He scales the peaks to burrow like a mole  
In cliffs no vaster than his golden dream.

Thus the Prospector: one who gives his all  
To find a rainbow and its pot of gold,  
Or mayhap dross for which a star is sold. . .  
And win or lose, he wins,—harks he the call.  
No arid waste *his* mind: he had his flight  
And visions unattained by urbanite.

## THE OPTIMIST

The world is for the optimist, and he  
Looks forward to the good in everything:  
He smiles at narrow cults which numb and bring  
But bondage to the minds that should be free;  
Though oft he stumble he yet tries to be  
Constructive in his swift recovering,  
Nor takes supinely what the Fates may fling;  
Yet harkens to that Sage of Galilee:  
“Neither do I condemn thee——sin no more——”  
The words of One with faith in all mankind,  
That Superman of all-embracing mind  
Would not condemn!—to hope flung wide the door;  
From persecution bade he them desist:  
He was the great constructive Optimist.

## EFFKABEE

(Translated from an old Chinese manuscript)

Effkabee, fearful of a past misdeed,  
Fled to the coast and sought by craft and stealth,  
With smirk and smile and flaunted vulgar wealth  
To captivate the natives, then proceed  
To filch their lands and bamboo, and indeed  
While clutching at their very commonwealth,  
He'd dine with them and falsely drink their health  
Professing faith in every cult and creed.

Pomposity and bluff his only staff,  
His tottering morale dragged at his soul;  
On temple days in terror he would crawl  
(Though seemingly he marched with strut and laugh)  
And try to bribe with treasure that he stole,  
False gods, destined to lure him to his fall.



## THE CHAMPION

Applause like a barrage the Champion hails.  
Deep from the amphitheatre's writhing slopes  
It rolls. A superman glides through the ropes—  
The mightiest of many fighting males!  
The throng, sophisticated, all details  
Observe. Breathless, they weigh their fears and hopes  
As man shakes hand of man with whom he copes,  
And neither one before the other quails.

Time! A flash of brawn and a blotch of blood!  
Round after round they mill! A click! A thud!  
The Master smiles (it was a cunning thrust),  
Then stoops to lift his rival from the dust.  
Brutal? But no! He played a brilliant part  
And genius is acclaimed in every art.

## SING SING PRISON

I trudged the swales, my dragging feet like lead;  
The sun poured down a cold and garish light  
Upon a hard world ruled by gold and might:  
(My sonnets did not fit their plans, they said.)  
But on I plunged, my shadow stalked ahead,  
Unheeding my despair and sorry plight.  
The trees were stark; the birds took silly fright;  
The mud sucked greedily; my hopes were dead.

And thus I topped a hill and saw the blue  
Expanse of the Hudson's generous sweep;  
And there I spied a place of death and stealth:  
A prison, guarded, walled, with donjon deep;  
Its barred wings spread to hatch its devil's crew;  
'Twas then I found in freedom wondrous wealth.

## TO MARSHALL THE MODEST POET

O, Poet of sweet Acadie, why fear  
That thy rich verse which shines in worthiness,  
Though wrought in modesty and gentle dress,  
Is not of tone to tempt a stranger's ear?  
The stanza and its measure is a mere  
Conveyance for thy reverent caress  
Of song, composed when 'neath a fervid stress  
Of yearning spirit, yet with vision clear.

Thy travelled mind doth blend Venetian art  
With Brookfield's peaceful pictures, and has stored  
Much worldly-wise philosophy that tunes  
Responsive to thy brother's eager heart.  
Thy verse will live! Inspired, thy pen has scored  
Full deep the grace of those immortal runes!

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